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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**MAYOR NEWSOM AND AUDI ANNOUNCE PEDESTRIAN PROMENADE
ON POWELL STREET IN UNION SQUARE**

San Francisco, CA—Mayor Gavin Newsom today announced the construction of the City's latest Pavement to Parks project, a new and innovative public space in the heart of San Francisco's commercial downtown as part of a new partnership between the City & County of San Francisco, The Union Square Business Improvement District (BID) and Audi of America. This new public space will take the form of a continuous pedestrian promenade along Powell Street for two blocks between Ellis and Geary Streets and running alongside the famed Cable Car. The new Powell Street Promenade will provide more space for pedestrians to sit and relax and enjoy one of San Francisco's most vibrant corridors.

"Through an innovative public-private partnership, we are creating a vibrant, new green public space in the heart of our City, despite limited resources and a difficult economic climate," said Mayor Newsom. "I applaud Audi for their generous financial support and for partnering with the City and the Union Square BID. I also want to thank the BID for its leadership in the district for the past 11 years, and for expanding in 2009 from 10 to 27 blocks, increasing its capacity to invest in improvements, maintenance and activation of innovative public spaces such as the Powell Street Promenade."

In 2009, the Mayor's Office together with the Planning Department worked with the Union Square BID and local merchants and property owners on a pilot test project that created a temporary pedestrian promenade along Powell Street last December. After reviewing the results of the pilot project and holding several community meetings, a concept design was created by the BID to provide a beautiful and much needed new walking and resting area for two blocks along Powell between Ellis and Geary. Audi of America partnered with the BID to provide the necessary design and construction funds for the Powell Street Promenade. Installation is expected to be finished by April 2011.

"Audi is honored to take part in this exciting and important project for the people of San Francisco," said Scott Keogh, Chief Marketing Officer for Audi of America. "As a global hub of art and aesthetic, it seemed only natural that Audi – a company that stands for innovation and design – partner with the City of San Francisco to re-imagine Powell Street."

Over an average weekend, up to 100,000 pedestrians walk along this portion of Powell Street, contributing to a highly animated yet often congested sidewalk experience. The Powell Street Promenade will provide extra space for people to walk, sit at a table or on a bench, chat with a friend, or just watch as thousands of people pass by. Wood, stone, and metal trim will provide a rich visual quality to the space, softened by landscaping and pedestrian scale lighting. In 2011, construction will begin on the Central Subway Project along Stockton Street, creating a much more pressing need to increase the pedestrian holding capacity along Powell Street in an elegant and comfortable way.



“The Union Square BID is excited to be the project sponsor,” James C. Flood, The Union Square Board President, said. “With construction for the Central Subway on Stockton Street right around the corner, Audi’s gift couldn’t have come at a better time. We are anxious to begin work and committed to the on-going maintenance of the new promenade.”

The pro-bono design team for the Powell Street Promenade, which includes the firm Royston, Hanamoto, Alley and Abey (RHAA) and BAR Architects, have worked with the community to develop a preliminary concept vision for the project site. Following the model of the Pavement to Parks program where local designers work free of charge to develop plans for new and innovative public spaces around the City, the Powell Street Promenade will be the marquee Pavement to Parks project in 2011. Other, smaller projects are also being planned for neighborhoods throughout the City.

For designs of the Powell Street Promenade, go to: <http://www.unionsquarebid.com/>

Pavement to Parks aims to reclaim unused public right of ways and quickly and inexpensively turn them into new public plazas and parks. Today, there are nine completed projects including four plazas (Castro, Guerrero Park, Showplace Triangle Plaza, Naples Green Plaza) and five parklets (Divisadero Parklet, 22nd Street Parklet, 24th Street Parklet at Sanchez, 24th Street Parklet at Noe, Columbus Parklet #1 with Columbus Parklet #2 forthcoming). The program is a collaborative effort between the Mayor’s Office, the Department of Public Works, the Planning Department, and the Municipal Transportation Agency.

Recently, the Department of Public Works (DPW) issued detailed implementation guidelines for the approval and installation of parklets consistent with the sidewalk landscaping program. Request for Proposals (RFP) for projects was issued to Community Benefit Districts (CBDs), storefront business owners and non-profit institutions and community organizations. DPW received 42 applications with permitting for nearly 30 parklet proposals. Funds for construction will be the responsibility of the permit holder.

For more information about Pavement to Parks, go to <http://sfpavementtoparks.sfplanning.org/>

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